



North Carolina Division of Child Development
May 2005

Emergency Preparedness Tips for Child Care Providers

BEFORE AN EMERGENCY...

Know Your Risks

North Carolina child care providers are vulnerable to natural disasters and man-made emergencies of all kinds, ranging from hurricanes and floods to fires and chemical spills. *Call your county Emergency Management office or Red Cross chapter to learn your area's risks/how to prepare.*

Plan Ahead

Your program may want to build on the required emergency procedures to develop a comprehensive emergency plan. Consider...

- What will you do if an emergency occurs while children are in your care?
- How might your response vary depending upon the type of emergency?
- Where will you take the children to minimize the risk of injury?
- In case an emergency requires relocation, do you have secondary sites and emergency transportation lined up? Do you have *portable* records/supplies?
- What will you say to children to reduce their fear and increase safety?
- How will you communicate with parents, local authorities, and DCD?
- What will you do if phone lines or cell phone towers are down/circuits are busy?

View an emergency plan template at:
http://ncchildcare.dhhs.state.nc.us/pdf_forms/evacuation_childcare_providers.pdf

Prepare An Emergency Supplies Kit (should be *portable* in case of evacuation)

- List of emergency phone numbers
- (As available) cell phone, calling card, change for pay phones, “walkie talkies”
- Water—backup supply of what you typically use in a day (*note: boiled water is not good for infants*)
- Non-perishable food; manual can opener
- First aid kit, blankets
- Radio, flashlights, extra batteries
- Handwashing solution that does not require running water
- Extra clothing/shoes
- Diapers, baby food/formula, other special items for infants and toddlers
- Other items for safety and comfort
- *If evacuating/relocating, remember child records, attendance sheets*

Help Staff and Children Prepare

- At least once a year, train staff on your emergency plan, specific disaster roles, and the location of disaster supplies.
- Train new staff as part of orientation.
- In addition to monthly *fire* drills, have periodic drills for other possible emergencies (e.g., severe weather/tornadoes)
- Look for approved inservice training on emergency preparedness topics.
- Identify “safe places” in your facility to take children during storms.
- Prepare children for emergencies through informative yet non-threatening activities.

Help Staff and Children Prepare *(cont.)*

- Provide parents with emergency preparedness materials for the home. (Example: “Emergency Preparedness Checklist.” Call your Red Cross chapter for a limited number of free copies.)

DURING/AFTER AN EMERGENCY...

Protect the Health and Safety of the Children in Your Care

If an emergency occurs while children are in your center or home:

- Make sure all children and staff are accounted for and safe.
- If in need of immediate help, call 911.
- Call your DCD licensing consultant to report problem/get troubleshooting help.
- Contact parents as soon as possible and make arrangements for children to be reunited with their families.
- Supervise children until they are reunited with their families.

Before children return to your facility:

- Walk around your facility to identify possible unsafe/unhealthy conditions. If you have any questions about conditions, you must have the appropriate inspectors visit your facility before you reopen.
- If your facility is not safe, you may be allowed to relocate temporarily.

To reopen or relocate, contact your licensing consultant. If you cannot reach a licensing consultant or supervisor, call DCD Regulatory Services in Raleigh at 1-800-859-0829 or 919/662-4527.

DCD will try to make information available to providers via hotlines after a disaster; tune in to media announcements.

Consider Expanding Services

If your program is fully operational and could take extra children in an emergency, contact your licensing consultant. If some

programs are closed, DCD might activate special licensing policies to allow others to temporarily expand capacity.

Call DCD to Learn about Assistance

DCD has a disaster plan – see:

http://ncchildcare.dhhs.state.nc.us/pdf_forms/dcdadis.pdf

Depending on providers’ needs and the Division’s resources, the Division *might* offer some of the following services:

- **Assistance in developing a plan to relocate children** if an emergency occurs when children are in care and poses an immediate threat
- **Child care provider needs assessment**
- Special steps to continue **reimbursement for subsidized child care**
- **Assess availability of funds to support emergency child care** to enable families to qualify for subsidized care based on disaster-related needs
- Continuation of **investigations of alleged abuse/neglect** in child care
- **Special licensing policies** to offer providers more flexibility while still assuring healthy and safe care
- Help in establishing **temporary child care** arrangements, if needed

RESOURCES

- **American Red Cross**—See phone book or www.redcross.org/where/where.html to find contact information for your local chapter -Preparedness info., including helping children prepare for/cope with disaster: www.redcross.org/services/disaster/beprepared/
- **Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA)**—www.fema.gov/ -How to prepare for specific types of emergencies: <http://www.fema.gov/help/index.shtm>
- **NC Division of Emergency Management** www.dem.dcc.state.nc.us/ -Call to identify your local Emergency Management Coordinator: 919-733-3867
- **Your child care resource and referral agency**—possible preparedness/recovery help.